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Congress Protects Pork In Pentagon Spending

Budget Cutters Spare '95 Defense Plan

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Before Congress adjourned last year it passed a \$243 billion defense appropriations bill containing dozens of "pork barrel" projects for members' home states, as well as numerous non-defense programs that could not get funded in other spending bills.

Among them were \$5.4 million for Hawaii's Small Business Development Center; \$3.5 million for a Cook County, Ill., military-style boot camp for youthful drug offenders; \$10 million for a National Guard outreach program to help Los Angeles youth; and \$1.5 million to round up wild horses wandering onto the White Sands, N.M., Missile Range—a job once handled by the Bureau of Land Management.

There was \$15 million for developing an electric car, a project that found a home in the defense bill in the late 1980s when money for energy appropriations grew tight.

Now Congress, in its first round of serious budget cutting, is slashing billions of dollars of previously approved spending, for purposes ranging from public broadcasting to housing AIDS patients.

But the Republican leadership on Capitol Hill has left untouched

the projects listed above. The spending is part of billions of dollars never sought by the Pentagon, but added to the defense bill last fall at the behest of senators and representatives from both parties.

"The insertion of these items has become an incredible art form," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He has compiled a list of more than \$6 billion in defense projects that he says represent "wasteful, earmarked, non-defense, or otherwise low-priority programs."

Despite the GOP's seizure of control of Congress in the 1994 midterm elections, McCain said, refusal to cut these programs suggests "business as usual" is continuing in Congress.

Republican leaders have given defense a comparatively protected position as they go about the initial round of budget cutting. A House-passed bill cuts \$17.1 billion from domestic programs, but nothing from the 1995 defense budget. A toned-down Senate version, which trims \$13.3 billion, also exempts defense.

In separate, supplemental legislation, the House and Senate did propose defense cuts of \$1.4 billion and \$1.9 billion, respectively.

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Budget Cutters Spare Pork In Defense Appropriations

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in allocating emergency funds to replenish Pentagon coffers. The House cut \$502 million from the administration's technology reinvestment program, which helps defense companies convert to civilian production.

But almost all of the projects added by members last fall to the 1995 defense budget have so far survived. A House-Senate conference on the recisions bill, scheduled to begin Wednesday, will be the last chance to kill these "add-ons" for fiscal 1995.

Hawaii, the home state of Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D), then chairman of the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee, got more than the Small Business Center among the earmarked projects. There was \$56.4 million earmarked for the Pacific Missile Range; \$13 million for a high-performance computer facility on Maui; \$10 million to home port two transport vessels in Pearl Harbor; and additional funds for Hawaii-based military medical facilities.

A House-Senate report specifically stipulated that the Maui facility be exempted from reductions that were being applied to other such computer facilities.

The \$3.5 million for a drug offenders' boot camp in Cook County originated with a request by the sheriff to then-House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), according to a congressional source.

Rostenkowski arranged for language to be inserted in the defense bill while it was before House-Sen-

ate conferees—after the measure had already been before the House and Senate for a vote.

The conferees directed "that the Department of Defense provide assistance to the county sheriff's office in the planning of a military-style regime and curriculum at the facility."

In a similar, if more traditional vein, then-Senate Minority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) arranged to earmark \$11 million in the same defense bill for the Army to purchase additional executive jet aircraft from a Kansas corporation that produces Lear jets.

"It's like a disease," said McCain. "It's never static. It gets worse or you kill it."

McCain complained during a Senate floor debate March 16 that the current round of budget cuts "does not rescind Defense Department support [\$15.4 million] for the Olympics and other sporting events . . . does not touch congressional add-ons for excess [National] Guard and Reserve equipment, and does not rescind any of the nearly \$1 billion in congressionally added military construction projects, much less funding for projects on bases slated for closure."

As budget rules have clamped ceilings on small, non-defense appropriations bills, the annual defense appropriation bill increasingly has been viewed as a bank of last resort for programs and projects once handled in those smaller measures.

For example, the Bureau of Land Management used to handle the roundup of wild horses on the White Sands proving grounds. The animals



SEN. DANIEL K. INOUE

... defense bill add-ons help his state

would be turned over to New Mexico prisoners to be broken and sold. BLM discontinued the program last year because it was too expensive, according to a spokesman for Sen. Pete V. Domenici (R-N.M.).

Domenici, who chairs the Senate Budget Committee, and New Mexico Rep. Joe Skeen (R), a member of the House Appropriations Committee, collaborated to get the \$1.5 million put into last year's defense bill to pick up the slack, the spokesman said.

Domenici arranged to have \$20 million added to the same defense bill for an additional neutron accelerator project at the Los Alamos Laboratory in his state, after money appropriated in the energy spending bill ran out last year.

"There was no other place to go," said a congressional aide.